



**U.S. Army Research Institute  
for the Behavioral and Social Sciences**

**Research Report 1683**

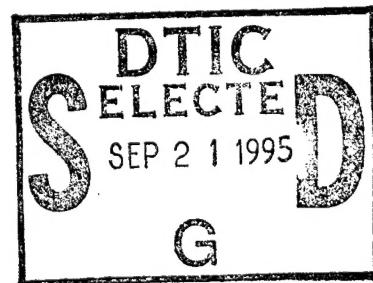
# **Intercultural Communication Requirements for Special Forces Teams**

**Teresa L. Russell**  
Human Resources Research Organization

**Jennifer L. Crafts**  
Human Resources Research Organization

**Judith E. Brooks**  
U.S. Army Research Institute

19950920 074



**July 1995**

**DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 5**

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

# U.S. ARMY RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR THE BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**A Field Operating Agency Under the Jurisdiction  
of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel**

**EDGAR M. JOHNSON**  
**Director**

---

Research accomplished under contract  
for the Department of the Army

Human Resources Research Organization  
American Institutes for Research

Technical review by

Scott Graham  
V. Melissa Holland

## NOTICES

Accesion For	
NTIS	CRA&I
DTIC	TAB
Unannounced	
Justification _____	
By _____	
Distribution / _____	
Availability Codes	
Dist	Avail and / or Special

*A-1*

**DISTRIBUTION:** Primary distribution of this report has been made by ARI. Please address correspondence concerning distribution of reports to: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, ATTN: PERI-POX, 5001 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria, Virginia 22333-5600.

**FINAL DISPOSITION:** This report may be destroyed when it is no longer needed. Please do not return it to the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.

**NOTE:** The findings in this report are not to be construed as an official Department of the Army position, unless so designated by other authorized documents.

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, Washington, DC 20503.

## **Intercultural Communication Requirements for Special Forces Teams**

**Teresa L. Russell**

Human Resources Research Organization

**Jennifer L. Crafts**

Human Resources Research Organization

**Judith E. Brooks**

U.S. Army Research Institute

**Organization and Personnel Resources Research Unit**  
**Paul A. Gade, Chief**

**Personnel and Training Systems Research Division**  
**Zita M. Simutis, Director**

U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences  
5001 Eisenhower Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia 22333-5600

Office, Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel  
Department of the Army

**July 1995**

---

**Army Project Number**  
**20363007A792**

**Manpower and Personnel**

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

## FOREWORD

---

The U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (ARI) and the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, have established a program of analysis and research to address manpower and personnel needs of Special Operations Forces. Within this program, USAJFKSWCS is giving high priority to efforts to ensure that Special Operations Forces have the necessary intercultural communication skills to perform their missions effectively. This particular effort takes the important initial step of identifying critical dimensions of intercultural communication performance for Special Forces.

The Organization and Personnel Resources Research Unit of ARI's Manpower and Personnel Research Division conducted the study as part of Task 1224, Improving Special Forces' Personnel Development. The findings contained in this report were briefed to the Deputy Commander of USAJFKSWCS in December 1994. The findings support identification of appropriate topics for intercultural communication training, identification of any training gaps that currently exist, and enhancement of intercultural communication training programs.

EDGAR M. JOHNSON  
Director

## INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIAL FORCES TEAMS

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

#### Research Requirement:

The goal of the project was to identify critical performance dimensions relevant to intercultural communication for Special Forces (SF) and appropriate intercultural training topics. We planned to accomplish this goal by reviewing the published literature, analyzing existing critical incident data, and tying intercultural communication performance categories to the content of current U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS) training courses.

#### Procedure:

We identified intercultural training topics by reviewing work by theorists and trainers in a variety of disciplines to determine broad areas of intercultural communication training and to describe specific subtopics covered within each one. Next, we reviewed and sorted critical incidents collected from an earlier SF job analysis to discover SF performance categories specific to intercultural communication. We developed definitions for emergent intercultural communication performance categories with examples of high and low performance for each. Through analysis of training materials, we determined how current training content mapped onto the topics and subtopics identified in the literature review. Finally, we mapped the SF intercultural communication performance categories onto the current training topics to determine whether any gaps exist between what is trained and what team members must perform on the job.

#### Findings:

The critical incident sorting procedure resulted in a set of eight intercultural communication performance categories for SF. These categories vary in the level of intercultural skill requirements -- from the basic awareness stage, to knowledge of the specific culture, to application of intercultural skills. When the eight communication categories are mapped against current training in terms of the level of skill provided, it is clear that most qualification course training is at the awareness level, and that the Regional Orientation and Regional Studies Courses provide intercultural awareness and knowledge. Current language training provides intercultural language skills. The main topics and most of the subtopics identified in the literature are trained in Special Operations Forces courses. Possible gaps include several subtopics within the topic areas of culture-specific knowledge and culture-related abilities. We suggested several recognized training methods as potential ways to include more skills training.

Utilization of Findings:

USAJFKSWCS training developers and planners may use the findings to improve the training SF soldiers receive for intercultural communication skill development. The findings include specific suggestions for training enhancements. One possibility, for example, is to incorporate more hands-on type exercises that make use of currently available SF critical incident data.

# **INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIAL FORCES TEAMS**

## **CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
INTRODUCTION .....	1
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION TRAINING TOPICS .....	1
Practical Knowledge.....	2
Knowledge of Human Behavior.....	2
Area-Specific Knowledge.....	4
Culture-Specific Knowledge.....	4
Culture-Related Abilities .....	8
Other Considerations.....	8
SF-SPECIFIC INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION .....	9
SF Attributes.....	9
Analysis of Critical Incident Data .....	10
SF Intercultural Communication Performance Categories .....	13
SF Intercultural Communication Performance Categories and Stages of Skill Acquisition .....	18
IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION TRAINING IN SPECIAL FORCES.....	19
Current SF Intercultural Communication Training .....	19
SF Training and Intercultural Communication Training Topics .....	20
SF Training and the Intercultural Communication performance Categories .....	23
Some Recognized Training Methods.....	25
SUMMARY.....	27
REFERENCES .....	29
APPENDIX A. Intercultural Communication Training Topics by Theorist or Trainer .....	31

**CONTENTS (Continued)**

---

	Page
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	
Table 1. Intercultural communication training topics and subtopics .....	3
2. SF intercultural communication attributes and appropriate measurement methods.....	10
3. SF intercultural communication performance categories and the number of incidents in each .....	12
4. The breakdown of regional orientation course topics: Hours for each topic.....	20
5. Intercultural communication training topics and subtopics tied to current SF training.....	21
6. Current SF intercultural training tied to SF performance categories .....	24

## **INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIAL FORCES TEAMS**

### **Introduction**

Communicating effectively with individuals from other cultures is essential for Special Forces (SF) teams (Bruton, 1994; Nash, 1994; Shachnow, 1993). As force-multipliers they train, advise, and assist indigenous people, often living with them and working side-by-side with them. SF soldiers must possess language skills, interpersonal skills, cultural knowledge, and non-verbal communication skills to do their job of conveying technical skills and knowledge to indigenous troops, negotiating resources and plans, and developing positive regard for the United States and SF (Nash, 1994; Shachnow, 1993).

A strong and renewed emphasis on intercultural communication is evidenced in recently published articles describing the anticipated future direction of Special Operations activities in general and of missions that SF will likely perform (Boyatt, 1994; Holmes, 1994). In addition, key decision-makers in SF and within the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS) expect that foreign internal defense will continue to be the main focus for SF, based on its role as the primary mission in recent years (Russell et al., 1995). These same decision-makers believe that operations involving intercultural communications (e.g., humanitarian aid, coalition warfare) will increase in importance in the coming years.

Although there is general agreement about the importance of intercultural communication, some fundamental questions need to be addressed. Initially, we need to define what is meant by intercultural communication and to identify the specific intercultural skills and knowledge needed in SF. We also need to examine current SF programs that provide intercultural training, then identify enhancements to selection and training that could make SF personnel better prepared for overseas operations.

The purpose of this project was to provide preliminary answers to those questions. It involved three primary steps: (1) identifying intercultural communication training topics in the published literature, (2) defining intercultural communication in terms of individual attributes and job performance categories, building on research reported by Russell et al. (1995) and Russell, Crafts, Tagliareni, McCloy, and Barkley (1994), and (3) tying intercultural communication training topics and performance categories to the content of training courses currently conducted by USAJFKSWCS.

### **Intercultural Communication Training Topics**

The study of intercultural communication is multidisciplinary (Shachnow, 1993). Trainers and theorists come from such diverse backgrounds as business management (e.g., Gannon, 1994), psychology and counseling (e.g., Pedersen, 1994), private-sector training

(e.g., Ronen, 1989) and speech communication (e.g., Gudykunst, 1994). Even so, their writings tend to draw on a common body of research and theory.

The broad areas of intercultural communication training content described by different theorists and trainers are:

- Practical Knowledge,
- Knowledge of Human Behavior,
- Area-Specific Knowledge,
- Culture-Specific Knowledge, and
- Culture-Related Abilities.

This section of the report provides an overview of these five broad areas and their associated subtopics, as shown in Table 1. The interested reader may refer to Appendix A for a compilation of topics and subtopics organized by specific theorists and trainers.

### **Practical Knowledge**

Moving or travelling to a foreign country presents a number of practical concerns, such as those related to passports, laws, shopping, schools, immunizations, and so forth. Brislin and Yoshida (1994) contend that practical, immediate concerns need to be dealt with early in a training program if the trainees will be leaving on their overseas assignment soon after training. Otherwise trainees will be distracted by their immediate concerns during the training session.

### **Knowledge of Human Behavior**

A basic understanding of human behavior and some self-knowledge are important for several reasons. First, there is considerable cultural variability within some cultures. Cultures have subcultures, and each person within a culture has his/her own set of values, family customs, and so on. One danger of culture-specific training is that trainees may develop inaccurate or inflexible stereotypes that, when mistakenly assumed during an interaction with someone from another culture, could damage relations. Therefore, trainees need to achieve a level of cultural sensitivity that enables them to learn, adapt, and deal with situations that were not anticipated in training. Another reason for training in human behavior is to help trainees understand how and why they might react to a new culture. Being able to predict and understand their own behavior and emotions is expected to help lower the anxiety trainees feel when they actually communicate with someone from another culture.

Table 1

Intercultural Communication Training Topics and Subtopics

Topic	Subtopics
Practical knowledge	Move or travel-related information
Knowledge of human behavior	Social psychology Culture shock Self knowledge
Area specific knowledge	History Sociology Economics Politics Geography
Culture specific knowledge	Individualism/collectivism Social hierarchy or power distance Uncertainty avoidance Masculinity/femininity Language usage Language Nonverbal communication Roles Rituals and superstitions Religion, beliefs, attitudes, and values
Culture related abilities	Tolerance for ambiguity Empathy and non-judgmentalism Adaptability Interpersonal skills

**General/Social Psychology.**<sup>1</sup> In interacting with strangers, it is a natural tendency to reduce anxieties about the situation by making strangers' behavior more predictable. It is also natural to view people and cultures that are different with some apprehension. One way to deal with such anxiety is to simplify our expectations about others by categorizing into stereotypes. As mentioned, stereotypes can lead trainees to make inaccurate assumptions about someone's behavior. For example, in some cultures officers are from an elite subculture that is vastly different from that of the indigenous people. Trainees need to be able to test and modify their assumptions about people in order to communicate effectively. A background in these general areas of psychology will help trainees understand human behavior (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994; Gudykunst, 1994):

- attitude formation--how attitudes develop and how they change,
- stereotype formation--how stereotypes develop and how to overcome them, and
- attribution theory--how we make attributions about others' behavior.

**Culture Shock.** Culture shock theory helps trainees know what to expect on their overseas assignment. Culture shock refers to the anxiety one experiences in a new culture (Oberg, 1958; Pedersen, 1994). It results from not knowing when and how to do the right thing, not knowing what others expect of them, and not knowing what to expect from others.

**Self-Knowledge.** Gaining insight into one's own values and the way one's own life has been shaped by culture is typically advanced as an important first step in intercultural communication training (e.g., Brislin & Yoshida, 1994; Pedersen, 1994). Trainers use exercises and sometimes self-tests to highlight individuals' values and ideals.

### **Area-Specific Knowledge**

Area-specific knowledge such as politics, history, economics, sociology, and geography is widely recognized as important for effective intercultural relations. The roots of people's values and rituals come from history, religion, and geography. Moreover, area specific knowledge provides a foundation for understanding the culture.

### **Culture-Specific Knowledge**

Culture-specific knowledge refers to culture characteristics that influence the way individuals behave. Language, non-verbal behavior, rituals and superstitions, and values are a few examples of such characteristics.

**Individualism/Collectivism.** Individualism-collectivism, proposed by Hofstede (1980), is probably the most widely mentioned dimension of cross-cultural differences. In

---

<sup>1</sup>Brislin and Yoshida (1994) refer to this body of knowledge as culture-general because its themes are applicable to interactions, regardless of culture.

individualist cultures, the emphasis is on the individual and his or her goals. Individualists draw a clear distinction between self and society. In collectivist cultures, "people belong to ingroups or collectives which are supposed to look after them in exchange for loyalty" (Hofstede & Bond, 1984, p. 419). Individuals' self identities are closely tied to the ingroup. Collectivist societies value cooperation and tradition, and they view education as a means of gaining prestige and status. Individualist cultures typically view new (non-traditional) concepts positively and promote education as a means of improving one's competence and economic worth.

Individualists and collectivists differ in their regard for *face*, or one's public image (Gudykunst, 1994). Individualists' concern for face is self-oriented, preserving one's own image. Collectivists expect to give face to others, especially if those others are older or higher in status. When conflicting ideas are presented, young or low status individuals are expected to show respect by giving face to old or high status individuals. Individualists who help collectivists preserve face will be in a better position to build rapport.

Another important area of individualist-collectivist differences is in self-disclosure (Gudykunst, 1994). Generally, individualists are more disclosing of personal information. Individualists get to know each other by sharing personal information. That stage of relationship formation is not critical in collectivist societies.

Although both individualism and collectivism exist within every culture, cultures can be characterized as predominantly individualistic or collectivistic (Gudykunst, 1994; Hofstede, 1980, 1991). The United States, with its strong emphasis on individual rights, is the world's most individualist culture (Hofstede, 1980). Arab, African, Asian, and Latin cultures are mostly collectivistic. Although knowledge of individualism and collectivism should help trainees interact in diverse cultures, they must be trained to avoid relying on stereotypes, because there is variability within cultures (Gudykunst, 1994).

**Social Hierarchy or Power Distance.** *Power distance* refers to the distribution of power in a society (Hofstede, 1980). In high power distance cultures there is a drastic difference in the amount of power given to people from different social strata. People from high power distance cultures accept a rather rigid social hierarchy; they accept inequities in power as a part of the system. They would not, for example, question orders from someone higher on the social hierarchy (e.g., an officer, a teacher, a parent); instead they would expect to be told what to do. In low power distance cultures, the distribution of power is relatively flat; a superior's orders may not be accepted at face value. In low power distance cultures, individuals may communicate with each other on a first name basis, regardless of each person's position within the social hierarchy. A belief in equality reduces the need for elaborate forms of social address, since formality functions to emphasize status. Generally, the United States is a low power distance culture (Gudykunst, 1994). Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, and Venezuela are examples of high power distance cultures.

**Uncertainty Avoidance.** High uncertainty avoidance cultures have a low tolerance for ambiguity, "which expresses itself in higher level of anxiety and energy release, greater need for formal rules and absolute truth, and less tolerance for people or groups with deviant ideas or behavior" (Hofstede, 1979, p. 395). Conformity is very important in uncertainty avoidance cultures; people who behave outside the cultural norms are viewed as dangerous. High uncertainty avoidance cultures develop elaborate rules and rituals to make situations and behaviors predictable. High uncertainty avoidance cultures include Egypt, Belgium, Guatemala, and Portugal (Gudykunst, 1994). Examples of low uncertainty avoidance cultures are India, Jamaica, and the United States.

**Masculinity/Femininity.** "People in highly masculine cultures value things, power, and assertiveness, whereas people in cultures low on masculinity or high on femininity value quality of life and nurturance" (Gudykunst, 1994, p. 48). Highly masculine cultures draw a clear distinction between male and female roles. While the United States falls somewhere in the middle on this dimension, Italy and Venezuela are examples of masculine cultures, and Costa Rica and Norway are examples of cultures high on femininity.

**Language Usage.** Language usage refers to expectations people have about conversation. How much information is to be inferred? Is silence appropriate? Hall (1976) profiled cultures in terms of the amount of contextual information in their messages. Hall described Japan as a high context culture in which communicators rely heavily on knowledge of the culture and rules or rituals for situations to understand the message. According to Hall's analysis, messages are communicated more explicitly in low context cultures like the United States and Germany. Gudykunst (1994) has described individualistic cultures as using low context messages, and collectivist cultures as relying more heavily on context in communications.

Several other aspects of language usage are important for effective intercultural communication (Gudykunst, 1994) such as:

- the use of silence,
- the use of exaggeration,
- directness or indirectness, and
- taking turns in conversation.

Cultures vary in their beliefs about talk and the role of silence in conversation. The Japanese, for example, use silence to show respect; Americans can be uncomfortable with it. In some cultures, particularly Arab cultures, exaggeration is expected. If an Arab says "no" without repeating it or emphasizing it many times, other Arabs will interpret the "no" as yes. In cultures where communication is typically indirect, speakers use qualifiers such as "maybe" or "perhaps" to soften messages and use implicit or ambiguous statements to avoid appearing too assertive. Telling another person "no" directly, may be seen as insulting. Clearly, people from cultures that value direct communication can become confused when negotiating with individuals who communicate indirectly or use exaggeration in conversation.

The way that we manage topics and take turns in conversations also differs across cultures (Gudykunst, 1994). In collectivist cultures for example, speakers take short turns and distribute turns evenly across speakers while individualists tend to take long turns and distribute the turns unevenly. Also, cultures differ in their use of techniques that indicate to others that we are listening (e.g., head nodding, uh-huhs). Individualists tend to use questions or comments while collectivists use utterances or emphatic supportive statements.

**Language.** Language is obviously central to effective intercultural communication. Research suggests that listeners tend to like speakers who try to speak the listeners' dialect (Gudykunst, 1994). Along the same lines, SF personnel reported that at least attempting to speak the indigenous language was important for gaining rapport with indigenous people (Russell et al., 1994).

**Nonverbal Communication.** Many cultural values manifest themselves in nonverbal communication. For example, an Asian child might avoid eye contact with an elder as a symbol of respect. There are many aspects of nonverbal communication including: (1) body language such as gestures, facial expressions, and posture, (2) distance and personal space, (3) personal accessories and possessions, (4) images such as photographs, art, and signs, (5) the use and value of time and (6) sound qualities such as inflection and the pace of speech.

**Roles.** Expectations about roles vary across (and within) cultures (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994). Is the father the disciplinarian in a family? Is it appropriate for women to work outside the home? What professions and community positions are given deference? Is nepotism accepted or expected? Knowledge of the culture's expectations about roles within the family, sex roles, and roles within the community and work environment is also an important element of intercultural communication.

**Rituals and Superstitions.** "Rituals range from day-to-day behaviors such as greetings to more commemorative ones that mark special occasions" (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994, p. 51). Greetings, meals, holidays, ceremonies, and celebrations have strongly embedded rituals.

Superstitions take on a sacred quality, and because they are often irrational, superstitions may be inappropriately discounted as unimportant. Brislin and Yoshida stress the importance of knowing rituals and being sensitive to superstitions in effective intercultural communication.

**Religion, Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values.** People's religions, beliefs, attitudes, and values influence their rituals and their behaviors. Punctuality, for example, is highly valued in American culture, but is not viewed as important in other cultures. Similarly, cultures differ in their perspective on the importance of work, and the importance of social ties.

For example, in some Latino cultures, interpersonal relationships can be used like a tool to obtain an objective (Archer & Fitch, 1994). Individuals may seek favors of a *palanca*

(person with clout) such as to get a job or to get admission into a school. Greater favors require stronger interpersonal ties. Using a *palanca* is viewed positively, in the moral sense, while practices that involve money are viewed negatively. Archer and Fitch relate *palanca* to the collectivist roots of those cultures. Events experienced individually are considered insignificant; greater value is placed on interpersonal bonds.

### **Culture-Related Abilities**

Abilities are individual qualities that are likely to make the individual more successful in intercultural situations. Abilities are generally thought to be qualities that individuals should bring with them to training, although most abilities can be enhanced with training. On a cautionary note, there is little, if any, research demonstrating the validity of the abilities described in this section. They are derived from theories.

**Tolerance for Ambiguity.** Tolerance for ambiguity is probably the most frequently mentioned cross-cultural ability (Gudykunst, 1994; Ronen, 1989). Ambiguous situations such as efforts to communicate with someone from another culture create anxiety. Although Gudykunst (1994) separates tolerance for ambiguity and stress management, his definitions of the two are highly similar. Individuals who can tolerate or overcome the stress associated with intercultural situations are more likely to react and communicate effectively.

**Empathy and Non-Judgmentalism.** Ethnocentrism is the tendency to value one's own culture and its customs and morals as superior to those of other cultures; it is judgmentalism. Empathy and non-judgmentalism require individuals to be open-minded to other value systems and beliefs. Gudykunst notes that empathy is the ability to appreciate others' beliefs, customs, and so on; it does not mean adopting the values of another culture, only being sensitive to them.<sup>2</sup>

**Adaptability.** Adaptability or behavioral flexibility is the ability to modify one's own behavior to meet the needs of the situation (Ronen, 1989). Individuals who are adaptable are alert to social and nonverbal cues and tailor their own behavior to the situation.

**Interpersonal Skills.** People who are sociable, pleasant, and get along well with others in typical interactions are likely to communicate well in intercultural situations (Ronen, 1989).

### **Other Considerations**

A number of other factors are likely to influence how well individuals communicate interculturally and perform in the overseas assignments. An important one is family (Ronen,

---

<sup>2</sup>This definition of empathy includes Gudykunst's (1994) definitions of empathy, mindfulness, and ability to predict and explain behavior.

1989). Family problems and spousal discontent are frequently cited reasons for returning to the United States prematurely. Training programs should take both the individual and those accompanying him or her into account. The individual's motivation may also be key to success in intercultural communication (Ronen, 1989). Individuals who see foreign assignment as a positive career move or are motivated because they are interested in the culture may perform better overseas.

### **SF-Specific Intercultural Communication**

Special Forces missions, particularly foreign internal defense, require SF officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) to work closely with indigenous people at all levels. The mission may require provision of medical services to the common populace, coordinating plans with officers, or working with the Country Team in the embassy.

A recent job analysis identified a wide range of individual attributes that are important for successful performance in SF, and used the critical incident technique to identify SF job performance categories (Russell et al., 1994). This section of the report highlights the data and results of the job analysis that are relevant to intercultural communication. It also describes how we further analyzed the critical incident data to identify critical performance dimensions relevant to intercultural communication for SF.

#### **SF Attributes**

SF attributes identified in the job analysis reflect the qualities that NCOs and officers should bring with them to the job. That is, they are appropriate for selection. With possible selection uses in mind, a recent study (ROADMAP) identified tests and exercises that are likely to be good measures of each of the attributes (Russell et al., 1995).

We reviewed the results of the SF job analysis and identified the individual attributes that were most closely tied to the intercultural training subtopics (specifically, the culture-related abilities) shown in Table 1. Next, using the results of the ROADMAP project, we identified the possible measures of these specific attributes. Table 2 shows the results.

Several existing Army tests or scales are likely to be good measures of intercultural communication abilities. The Emotional Stability, Dominance, and Agreeableness scales from the Assessment of Background and Life Experiences (ABLE) are examples. The measures that are *Proposed* are measures that do not yet exist; they are proposed for future development and use. *Experimental* measures are currently in development in Army Research Institute projects. As shown in Table 2, SF and ARI do not currently have any experimental measures of intercultural adaptability or non-verbal communication (Russell et al., 1995). New measures will need to be developed if USAJFKSWCS chooses to incorporate these areas into the selection system.

Table 2

## SF Intercultural Communication Attributes and Appropriate Measurement Methods

Intercultural Training Subtopic	SF Attributes (Russell et al., 1994)	Possible Selection Measures (Russell et al., 1995)
Tolerance for Ambiguity	Maturity--to be level headed and emotionally stable; to remain calm under stress.  Judgment and Reasoning--to make sound decisions; using common sense; improvising; extracting general principles and applying them in new situations.	Emotional Stability scale from the Assessment of Background and Life Experiences  Wonderlic Personnel Test  Experimental Problem Solving Skills Test
Empathy/Non-Judgmentalism	Cultural/Interpersonal Adaptability--to modify own style and behavior to fit the situation and culture; being <b>tolerant of other cultures and value systems</b> .  Interest in Other Cultures--to like learning about other cultures	Proposed Biographical Survey  Proposed Cultural Adaptability Role Play  Proposed Job Compatibility Questionnaire
Adaptability	Cultural/Interpersonal Adaptability--to <b>modify own style and behavior to fit the situation and culture</b> ; being tolerant of other cultures and value systems.	Proposed Biographical Survey  Proposed Cultural Adaptability Role Play  Proposed Job Compatibility Questionnaire
Interpersonal Skills	Persuasiveness/Diplomacy--to be tactful, pleasant, and diplomatic toward others; to be persuasive.  Interest in People--to like people, enjoying being around people.  Leadership--to use good judgment in dealing with subordinates; acting as a role model, communicating and supervising effectively.	Dominance and Agreeableness Scales from the Assessment of Background and Life Experiences  Formal Leadership Scale from the Army Biodata Inventory  Mature Team Commitment Scale from the Ranger Biodata Inventory  Dominance Scale from the Assessment of Background and Life Experiences  Peer and Supervisor Ratings

Analysis of Critical Incident Data

Critical incidents collected during the SF job analysis provided a rich source of information about SF jobs. Critical incidents are specific examples of performance that include brief descriptions of a situation, an individual's behavior in that situation, and the result of the behavior. The incidents had been gathered from officer and enlisted personnel representing all five regionally-oriented SF Groups and all SF military occupational specialties (MOSSs). During the job analysis, researchers analyzed the incidents to identify a comprehensive set of SF job performance categories. For the purposes of this study, we

conducted additional analyses of a subset of critical incidents to discover SF performance categories specifically relevant to intercultural communication. We conducted the critical incident analysis in six steps:

- (1) identify all intercultural critical incidents generated in the SF job analysis,
- (2) randomize the order of the critical incidents to begin the sorting process without regard to their prior assigned higher-order categories,
- (3) sort all incidents into categories based on the interpretation of their content,
- (4) review the contents of each category (and, as necessary, resort specific incidents) to form meaningful, non-overlapping categories,
- (5) define each category by the themes contained in the incidents, and
- (6) examine the results of the sorts to identify the categories with the most and least incidents and to identify any subgroup differences associated with rank (officer versus enlisted) or with region (group).

**Identify Intercultural Critical Incidents.** The first step in analyzing critical incidents was to identify all critical incidents generated in the SF job analysis workshops that pertained to intercultural communication. We collected all critical incidents from three performance categories we initially judged to contain elements of intercultural communication. These performance categories were:

- Building and Maintaining Effective Relationships with Indigenous Populations,
- Handling Difficult Interpersonal and Intercultural Situations, and
- Using and Enhancing Own Language Skills.

We also examined the critical incidents that belonged to a performance category called "Teaching Others" to identify additional relevant incidents. We felt the inclusion of these incidents was necessary, since many teaching incidents reflected an indigenous or host nation context. An additional set of seven critical incidents came from officers returning from peace-keeping missions. The officers had written critical incidents, and we were able to obtain copies from USAJFKSWCS.

**Randomize Critical Incidents.** We mixed the critical incidents into a random order so that we could essentially get a "fresh start" for the sorting exercise. We thought it logical to sort individual incidents without knowledge of the category they were assigned to as a result of the job analysis critical incident sort.

**Sort Critical Incidents.** We read all the critical incidents, and for each incident we wrote a statement summarizing the behaviors it contained. These broader statements

facilitated the step of identifying common threads or themes. As we applied the summary statements, we formed groups of similar incidents. Thus, while each group had some similarity in content at a summary level, the specific incidents could contain much different detailed information. At the end of this step, we had thirteen groups of performance incidents. We also identified and eliminated some critical incidents judged as not relevant or lacking an intercultural element. At the end of this step, a total of approximately 229 incidents remained.

**Form Performance Categories.** After all incidents had been initially sorted, we examined each group of incidents one at a time. The objective was to resort the contents of the groups, then combine or split the groups as necessary to arrive at a set of mutually exclusive (to the greatest extent possible), meaningful categories. Initially, we reduced the original thirteen groups of performance incidents to ten distinct groups. Following further reviews and discussions with project members, we identified a final set of eight performance categories. Table 3 lists these categories, with the approximate numbers of incidents in each.

Table 3

SF Intercultural Communication Performance Categories and the Number of Incidents in Each

---

Intercultural Communication Performance Categories	Number of Incidents
1. Building Rapport	28
2. Using MOS-Specific Skills to Enhance Rapport With Indigenous People	35
3. Engaging in Culture-Appropriate Customs	27
4. Negotiating	27
5. Dealing With Stressful Cultural Situations	31
6. Using Language Skills	52
7. Using Non-Verbal Communication	6
8. Adapting Training Methods to the Culture	23
Total	229

---

**Define Categories.** For each category, we created a series of short statements to convey the themes contained in the incidents. These statements are written at the summary level and represent both high and low levels of performance. We identified high and low performance levels through examination of effectiveness ratings gathered from SF personnel during the job analysis. That is, experienced soldiers had rated the effectiveness of the behavior of the individual in each critical incident. The examples of high and low

performance also helped us create broad category definitions containing key elements derived from the incidents.

**Examine Results.** We looked carefully at the categories for evidence of any subgroup differences (e.g., based on rank or region). One expected difference related to rank was that the majority of *Negotiating* incidents were provided by team leaders and warrant officers, due to the nature of their roles on the team. In terms of differences due to region, the performance category *Engaging in Culture-Appropriate Customs* had a high representation of incidents from those regions where the customs are markedly different from American customs and require greater flexibility and adaptability on the part of the SF soldier. Examples here include eating raw meat and routinely embracing or touching others.

We also looked at the results of the sorting to determine which categories were heavily represented by performance examples and which contained relatively few critical incidents. The categories containing the most critical incidents were *Using Language Skills* and *Using MOS-Specific Skills to Enhance Rapport with Indigenous People*. The category containing the fewest critical incidents was *Using Non-Verbal Communication*. The behaviors captured in these incidents were unique enough that the category could not be collapsed into another larger category.

### **SF Intercultural Communication Performance Categories**

The eight intercultural communication performance categories, along with their definitions and "high" and "low" performance examples are as follows<sup>3</sup>:

- **Building Rapport:** Establishing and maintaining mutually-satisfying interpersonal relations with indigenous people; devoting time and effort to build familiarity with individuals; showing consideration of, respect for, and responsiveness to the viewpoints, welfare, and feelings of indigenous people.

Examples of High Performance:

- demonstrating through actions and words a liking for being in the country and interacting with the indigenous people
- building mutual regard by spending time with indigenous people
- giving locals "comfort" items (e.g., cigarettes, toiletries)
- taking the indigenous peoples' viewpoint and welfare into account in making mission plans and changes
- finding a way to deal with a crime committed by an indigenous person that does not damage rapport (or prevents a loss of "face")

---

<sup>3</sup>In the definitions and examples, "indigenous people" refers to Host Nation representatives, guerrillas, and the local populace.

- responding concisely, clearly, and politely to requests for information (e.g., from media, military representatives, etc.)
- maintaining a professional physical appearance and attitude to enhance the public image of and respect for SF
- showing respect for indigenous people by consulting them about problems
- finding ways to allow indigenous people to save face

Examples of Low Performance:

- "talking down" to indigenous counterparts
- insulting the performance of or culture of indigenous individuals or forces
- breaking the same rules that SF set for their indigenous counterparts to follow
- refusing to participate in honoring an indigenous person
- rejecting the local culture and its differences
- showing favoritism to specific indigenous subgroups at the expense of others
- failing to keep up with policy changes that affect interactions with indigenous people

- **Using MOS-Specific Skills to Enhance Rapport With Indigenous People:**

Applying skills to gain confidence and acceptance of indigenous people; taking actions to directly benefit the indigenous population (apart from the mission requirements).

Examples of High Performance:

- troubleshooting and correcting weapon problems for indigenous counterparts
- showing indigenous soldiers how to effectively operate their weapon system(s)
- treating routine medical conditions and diseases of indigenous people
- informing indigenous people of useful first aid practices
- organizing help to respond to medical emergencies
- treating or saving local animals
- helping indigenous people to improve work-related or recreational facilities for their own use
- using commo methods to establish communication for locals

Example of Low Performance:

- damaging indigenous peoples' property by using an improper or unsafe demolition technique

- **Engaging in Culture-Appropriate Customs:** Applying knowledge of appropriate customs and accepted practices to smooth interactions with indigenous people; blending into the cultural setting by adopting local customs.

Examples of High Performance:

- taking culture-specific personal space and touch practices into account in dealing with indigenous people
- eating local foods, wearing local clothing, and behaving in accordance with local values
- participating in local rituals, parties, etc. to please indigenous people
- learning the cultural rationale for indigenous peoples' actions and modeling own behavior accordingly
- following local practices to obtain needed resources

Examples of Low Performance:

- refusing food or drink offered in good will by indigenous people
- refusing to participate in a local ceremony
- ignoring local customs
- acting inappropriately in intercultural social situations
- ignoring local practices or methods in solving problems (e.g., witch doctor's methods)

- **Negotiating:** Using appropriate diplomatic or persuasive techniques in dealings with coalition forces and indigenous people; promoting cooperation through interactions.

Examples of High Performance:

- listening to needs of indigenous people to better understand and work within customs, courtesies, and taboos
- taking needs of groups with differing agendas into account when making decisions
- offering concessions or positively stated constructive criticism to gain acceptance of an SF mission, methods, or advice
- conveying information in a convincing manner to change others' approach to a task or mission
- befriending an indigenous person to gain cooperation in obtaining resources, information, etc.
- taking the role of "go-between" to foster cooperation of opposing individuals or groups
- involving appropriate respected parties in discussing problems and making decisions
- informing fellow coalition members of consequences of security violations and insulting comments
- adapting plans to please indigenous people and improve the SF chances of mission success

Examples of Low Performance:

- failing to convince indigenous people of safer, more effective, or time-saving method or procedure to accomplish a task or mission

- imposing own ideals or thoughts on how to accomplish a task or mission on coalition or indigenous individuals
- assigning inappropriate work to coalition or indigenous personnel
- refusing to accept direction or inputs from indigenous people
- going against expressed wishes of indigenous people
- **Dealing With Stressful Cultural Situations:** Attempting to reduce or to avoid unnecessary conflict; setting an example of culturally-appropriate emotional control in context of confrontation or hostility.

Examples of High Performance:

- walking away from insults; ignoring another's attempts to escalate a confrontation
- de-escalating tension; avoiding or breaking up a fight
- finding a novel way to avoid hostile forces
- calming others who are stressed or emotional
- using techniques to defuse the impact of troublemakers; separating individuals to ease tension
- keeping negative personal feelings about other coalition members to oneself to avoid conflict
- establishing "ground rules" with unit members to clarify roles and working relationships
- showing no signs of fear or weakness when confronted by danger
- using personal style to set a performance example to relieve a stressful situation

Examples of Low Performance:

- displaying inappropriate anger; becoming belligerent
- provoking an argument or getting into a fight with an indigenous person
- failing to intervene in a verbal conflict between SF team and indigenous counterparts
- responding to a situation with insubordinate or disrespectful behavior
- fueling a power struggle
- showing confusion in response to actions of indigenous people
- getting frustrated when indigenous counterparts change plans

- **Using Language Skills:** Devoting effort to maintain and improve language skills; developing language skills beyond "survival" level; taking the initiative to facilitate communication when it can benefit the situation.

Examples of High Performance:

- creating tools (e.g., a dictionary) to facilitate communication with indigenous people
- speaking a foreign language according to the level and cultural background of the audience

- translating for others to ensure that communication can take place and will be accurate
- working with a translator effectively
- using language skills to rescue a team member from a difficult situation or to maintain the team's credibility
- devoting time and effort to quickly pick up basic language skills
- finding novel ways to learn or to practice phrases of a foreign language

Examples of Low Performance:

- using incorrect or insulting words when talking in a foreign tongue and confusing the audience about the meaning or the intent
- ignoring opportunities to improve language skills while in an ideal foreign environment to do so
- taking up a slot in language school without intending to improve skills and the language rating
- relying on others to communicate in the language trained in
- intentionally letting own language skills lapse after training
- failing to participate or apply effort while in language school

- **Using Non-Verbal Communication:** Acquiring and applying knowledge of cultural differences in body language to communicate when verbal language is not shared; interpreting meaning of gestures and other non-verbal cues; improvising and using novel methods to communicate.

Examples of High Performance:

- using sign language to communicate in situation where a verbal exchange is impossible because parties do not speak each others' language
- interpreting body posture or "body language" to judge an individual's true intentions
- teaching classes using only training aids and motions when interpreters become unavailable

Example of Low Performance:

- making culturally inappropriate, unacceptable, or offensive gestures

- **Adapting Training Methods to the Culture:** Modifying usual training plans and methods to fit the indigenous audience; incorporating training aids that are appropriate for the culture.

Examples of High Performance:

- investigating local customs for training so as to proceed without ruffling feathers

- modifying the training content, presentation, or standards to fit the level of the indigenous trainees
- adapting typical SF training methods to increase involvement of indigenous trainees
- elevating the status of participation in training to get indigenous people interested and motivated
- using locally valued or locally available training aids to enhance rapport and morale of trainees
- using techniques to gain indigenous commanders' satisfaction and continued support of SF-provided training

Examples of Low Performance:

- taking up valuable training time by using a translator when the trainer was expected to instruct alone
- sequencing training incorrectly such that indigenous trainees become confused

### **SF Intercultural Communication Performance Categories and Stages of Skill Acquisition**

There are three major stages in the acquisition of intercultural communication skills (Pedersen, 1994)--awareness, knowledge, and skill. At the awareness stage, individuals become more knowledgeable about themselves and aware of culture differences and biases. At the higher levels of acquisition, trainees acquire more knowledge and learn to apply it in intercultural interactions.

The SF intercultural communication performance categories vary in the level of intercultural communication skill requirements. Some categories such as *Using MOS-Specific Skills to Enhance Rapport with Indigenous People* require cultural awareness and perhaps some knowledge while others require skill and experience (e.g., *Negotiating*). *Using MOS-Specific Skills to Enhance Rapport with Indigenous People* is a natural application for SF soldiers who are trained in their MOS-specific skills. During the SF job analysis soldiers told us that virtually all people, regardless of the culture, appreciate medical assistance, help in repairing a gun, and so on.

*Building Rapport, Engaging in Culture-Appropriate Customs, and Using Non-Verbal Communication* are three performance categories that require some level of area-specific knowledge. Performing well in these categories requires more internalized knowledge of characteristics of the specific culture, beyond just a basic awareness of such characteristics.

*Using Language Skills, Adapting Training Methods to the Culture, Negotiating, and Dealing with Stressful Cultural Situations* require not only sensitivity and knowledge but also application of intercultural communication skills. The tasks are complex and the consequences of error can be dramatic. The required behaviors go beyond basic "people skills" due to the intercultural context. When operating within the boundaries of another culture, interpersonal situations are likely to be handled differently than in one's own country.

*Adapting Training Methods to the Culture* is appropriate for both officers and NCOs but probably more so for NCOs. Similarly, *Negotiating* is most relevant to officers, warrant officers, and team sergeants, although there are undoubtedly situations where NCOs must negotiate with indigenous people. To perform effectively in those categories, individuals must be able to discern the appropriate behavior for the situation swiftly and tailor their style adeptly.

### **Implications for Intercultural Communication Training in Special Forces**

#### **Current SF Intercultural Communication Training**

The USAJFKSWCS trains SF soldiers and officers in a wide array of technical skills, as well as leadership and military doctrine. Currently, the school does provide intercultural communication training for SF at several points in the training sequence:<sup>4</sup>

- during the SF Qualification Course (Q-Course),
- immediately prior to language training,
- language training,
- during specialized training for Civil Affairs (CA) or Psychological Operations (PSYOP), and
- after assignment to an SF team.

Three types of training relevant to intercultural communication are provided in the Q-Course. First, both NCOs and officers attend a seven-hour course on human behavior, negotiation skills, and self-awareness. Second, as a part of the Special Forces Detachment Officer Qualification Course, officers attend five two-hour training sessions on area studies (i.e., one each for Africa, Asia, Middle East, Europe, and Latin America). Third, during the Robin Sage field training exercise at the end of the Q-Course, trainees get hands-on experience negotiating with guerrillas.

Immediately prior to language training, NCOs and officers attend a 40 hour Regional Orientation Course (ROC). There are five ROCs, one for each of the five world regions of SF operations--Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle-East. Table 4 shows the breakdown of hours across topics for each of the five courses. The number of hours assigned

---

<sup>4</sup>It is important to note that USAJFKSWCS is continually updating its training, and the descriptions of training courses provided in this report could become dated very quickly. The courses described here were being taught or prepared in the Fall of 1994.

to each topic reflects a relative weight assignment.<sup>5</sup> In language training, trainees learn specific languages (e.g., Thai) relevant to their assigned region (e.g., Asia).

Table 4

The Breakdown of Regional Orientation Course Topics: Hours for Each Topic

Topic	Africa	Asia	Europe	Latin America	Middle East
Natural Environment	3	3	3	2	4
History	5	5	5	8	4
Culture	2	4	4	2	4
Religion	4	4	3	2	6
Cross-Cultural Communication	4	4	4	4	4
Economics	2	2	2	2	2
Foreign Policy	4	2	3	2	2
Contemporary Issues	10	10	10	12	8
Quiz/Evaluations	6	6	6	6	6

Officers who are in training for CA and PSYOP positions attend the Regional Studies Course (RSC). In all, the RSC is nearly 17 weeks long; it is actually composed of a host of subcourses ranging from one to 60 hours in length. The subcourses cover computers, foreign policy, political ideologies, military analysis, and economics in addition to negotiation techniques, culture, and intercultural communications.

USAJFKSWCS is in the process of developing exportable packages, video-taped regional orientation courses for use in the field. The exportable packages will mirror the 40-hour ROC content, and they are expected to be available for use in the field by the end of FY95.

#### SF Training and Intercultural Communication Training Topics

One goal of this project was to tie the content of existing USAJFKSWCS training courses to the major intercultural communication training topics and subtopics we identified through the literature review (see Table 1). In this section, we present these linkages, with an important caveat. The reader should bear in mind that we had to rely heavily on Programs of Instruction (POIs) and other written documentation in making these linkages. Perhaps in a

---

<sup>5</sup>The breakdown for covering course topics is a guideline. In actuality the course content and methods may vary, because contractors have some flexibility in presenting the course.

future step, trainers could be asked to rate the extent to which each training course covers each topic. That would provide a final analysis of training content. For now, the mapping (shown in Table 5) should be viewed as preliminary and not a definitive assessment of the training program.

Table 5

Intercultural Communication Training Topics and Subtopics Tied to Current SF Training

Intercultural Communication Training		Current SF Intercultural Training			
Topics	Subtopics	Qualification Course (Q-Course)	Regional Orientation Course (ROC)	Language Training	Regional Studies Course (RSC)
Practical Knowledge*	Move or travel-related information				
Area Specific Knowledge	History	O	NCO & O		CA/PSYOP
	Sociology	O	NCO & O		CA/PSYOP
	Economics	O	NCO & O		CA/PSYOP
	Politics	O	NCO & O		CA/PSYOP
	Geography	O	NCO & O		CA/PSYOP
Culture-Specific Knowledge	Individualism/Collectivism		NCO & O		CA/PSYOP
	Hierarchies, Class and Status: Power Distance		NCO & O		CA/PSYOP
	Uncertainty Avoidance				
	Masculinity/Femininity				
	Language Usage		NCO & O	NCO & O	CA/PSYOP
	Language			NCO & O	
	Non-Verbal Communication	NCO & O			

*Table continues*

Table 5 *continued*

Intercultural Communication Training		Current SF Intercultural Training			
Topics	Subtopics	Qualification Course (Q-Course)	Regional Orientation Course (ROC)	Language Training	Regional Studies Course (RSC)
Culture-Specific Knowledge <i>continued</i>	Roles		NCO & O		CA/PSYOP
	Rituals		NCO & O		CA/PSYOP
	Religion, Beliefs, Values		NCO & O		
Knowledge of Human Behavior	General Psychology	NCO & O			
	Culture Shock				
	Self Knowledge	NCO & O	NCO & O		CA/PSYOP
Abilities	Tolerance for Ambiguity				
	Empathy and Non-Judgmentalism		NCO & O		CA/PSYOP
	Adaptability				
	Interpersonal Skills	NCO & O			

NCO=Non-Commissioned Officer Training, O=Officer Training

CA= Civil Affairs Training, PSYOP= Psychological Operations Training

\*Not a priority training area for SF

We conceptualized the mapping in terms of the three major stages in acquisition of intercultural communication skills (Pedersen, 1994)--awareness, knowledge, and skill. At the awareness stage, individuals become more knowledgeable about themselves and aware of culture differences and biases. At the higher levels of acquisition, trainees acquire more knowledge and learn to apply it in intercultural interactions.

**Awareness.** Several steps in the SF training process are designed to make trainees sensitive to intercultural communication. During the Q-Course, Special Operations Forces psychologists teach non-verbal communication and principles of human behavior (see Table 5). All of the other area-specific aspects of training should also facilitate cultural awareness and sensitivity.

**Knowledge.** As shown in Table 5, SF training programs are very strong in providing area-specific training such as relevant history, politics, and so on. Additionally, an effective way to convey this type of information is through the lecture, videotape, and reading list

approach that most of the Q-Course, ROC, and RSC courses use (Gudykunst, 1994). This is clearly a strength of SF training programs.

One common method of providing knowledge and awareness of culture is to outline typical American values such as materialism and individuality and contrast another culture against them--the Contrast American Culture approach (Kraemer, 1974). An approach like this is currently used by RSC instructors in ROC and RSC intercultural communication courses. It is likely that those courses provide culture-specific knowledge in many areas such as individualism/collectivism, social class structure, language usage, rituals and superstitions, and perhaps others.

**Skill.** Development of skill requires practice. Our review of the POIs and discussion with instructors suggests that role playing or small group exercises are not used much in training, with the exception of perhaps the Robin Sage exercise.

**Possible Gaps.** Several points can be made based on our preliminary mapping of the SF training content against the training topics and subtopics identified in the literature review. Table 5 shows that SF training covers four of the five training topics. The exception is Practical Knowledge, but, realistically, this topic is not a priority for SF. In addition, SF training covers most of the subtopics identified in the literature. Based on our assessment, there do appear to be several subtopics not addressed in SF training: Uncertainty Avoidance, Masculinity/Femininity, Culture Shock, Tolerance for Ambiguity, and Adaptability. However, since our mapping has not been verified with course instructors, it is also possible that these subtopics are already included in SF training, using different terms than those found in the literature.

### **SF Training and the Intercultural Communication Performance Categories**

Table 6 maps SF training against the performance categories we derived from the critical incident analyses. The letters in the boxes indicate whether the course provides awareness (A), knowledge (K), or skill (S) relevant to the performance category. As shown, all of the SF intercultural training programs (Q-Course, ROC, RSC) help provide awareness to cultures. In that sense, all of the programs should provide a foundation for effective performance in all of the performance categories.

Table 6

## Current SF Intercultural Training Tied to SF Performance Categories

SF Intercultural Communication Performance Categories		Current SF Intercultural Training			
Degree of Culture Knowledge and Skill Requirements	Performance Categories	Qualifications Course (Q-Course)	Regional Orientation Course (ROC)	Language School	Regional Studies Course (RSC)
Categories that Require Intercultural Awareness	2. Using MOS-Specific Skills to Enhance Rapport with Indigenous People	A	A,K	A	A,K
Categories that Require Culture-Specific Knowledge	1. Building Rapport	A	A,K	A	A,K
	3. Engaging in Culture-Appropriate Customs	A	A,K	A	A,K
	7. Using Non-Verbal Communication	A,K	A	A	A
Categories that Require Culture-Specific Knowledge and Intercultural Communication Skill	6. Using Language Skills	A	A	A,K,S	A
	8. Adapting Training Methods to the Culture	A	A,K	A	A,K
	4. Negotiating	A	A,K	A	A,K
	5. Dealing with Stressful Cultural Situations	A	A,K	A	A,K

Note: "A" indicates the course provides intercultural **awareness** that is likely to be useful for the performance category. "K" indicates that the course provides intercultural **knowledge** that is likely to be useful for the performance category. "S" indicates that the course provides intercultural communication **skills** relevant to the performance category.

The extent to which SF training provides skills (beyond the awareness stage) needed to perform effectively in each performance dimension parallels the level requirements of the performance categories.<sup>6</sup> *Using MOS-Specific Skills to Enhance Rapport with Indigenous People* requires little culture-specific knowledge and skill and is, therefore, probably well

<sup>6</sup>Recall that the performance dimensions vary in their intercultural communication requirements. Some categories require very little familiarity with the culture, and other categories are highly culture-specific.

covered by just the Q-Course, and ROCs. Also, the non-verbal communication training in the Q-Course addresses *Using Non-Verbal Communication*.

ROC and RSC provide culture-specific knowledge relevant to a number of the performance categories. Such training should enable individuals to perform well in categories that require cultural awareness and knowledge, but not sophisticated application of skill. Those categories are: *Building Rapport* and *Engaging in Culture-Appropriate Customs*.

The more advanced performance categories require training and practical experience. The awareness and knowledge individuals obtain during the Q-Course, ROC, and RSC provide a foundation for learning to perform in the more advanced areas: *Adapting Training Methods to the Culture*, *Negotiating*, and *Dealing with Stressful Cultural Situations*.

Very few of the current SF training courses build intercultural communication skill. Of course, with practice in the field, individuals develop skills on the job as they apply knowledge and awareness gained in training. SF training would need to incorporate more hands-on type exercises to further intercultural communication skill training.

### **Some Recognized Training Methods**

Training methods described in the intercultural communication training literature range from paper-and-pencil exercises to interactive role plays and simulations. This section describes some of the more common methods, including methods that appear to be useful in the SF environment.

**Skill-Streamlining Approach (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994)**. The skill streamlining approach involves writing a specific script for dealing with an intercultural situation. The example Brislin and Yoshida provide is "how to apologize." Apologizing steps are:

- (1) decide whether an apology is needed,
- (2) decide how to apologize (in writing or verbally),
- (3) choose a time and place, and
- (4) carry out the apology in a sincere way.

Discussion revolves around how to do each step and what factors to consider in the decisions (e.g., how strong does the apology need to be? Is a written apology more, or less, acceptable in the host nation?).

The skill streamlining approach seems to be most appropriate for tasks that are highly standardized (i.e., not very variable). For example, it might be easy to develop a script for greetings, rituals, ceremonies, meals, and formal events that adhere to protocol. It might be more difficult to develop a script for a complex task like training indigenous forces.

**Tips for Handling Tasks (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994)**. Giving tips for tasks resembles the skill streamlining approach, but it involves providing tips and concepts rather than specific steps for executing a task. For example, Brislin and Yoshida give three tips for interacting with Germans:

- (1) Become more knowledgeable in world history, philosophy, geography, and politics.
- (2) Practice conducting intense discussion on the above topics. Voices may become emotional! Learn to be comfortable with such intense discussions.
- (3) Practice calling the other party by his or her title. Don't insist on being called or calling the other party by first name prematurely. (p. 106)

Tips could be useful for addressing more complex or variable tasks. Bruton (1994) brings up a number of cross-cultural questions that relate to training indigenous or host nation forces. Tip sheets answering questions like these could be useful for SF:

- How do host-nation students/trainees view the teacher/trainer?
- Do they view him as an expert or as a facilitator?
- Is he expected to have all the answers?
- Is it permissible for the teacher to acknowledge a mistake or to admit he does not know the answer?
- Do the host-nation officers train with their soldiers (at the risk of losing face if they err), train separately or not at all? (Bruton, 1994, p. 30).

Negotiating is another area where tips could be useful. Tips could address questions like: What techniques of persuasion are commonly used in the culture? What role should silence play in the negotiation? How should respect be shown to individuals high in status? How can the SF soldier help the indigenous person save face?

**Critical Incidents (Pedersen, 1994)**. Critical incidents are used as case studies for discussion. Pedersen suggests presenting situations from critical incidents to small groups of participants and asking them (a) how they would like to respond, (b) how they would be expected to respond, and (c) how they would respond.<sup>7</sup> SF trainees might be asked to consider the following situation:

You are team commander of an ODA working jointly with Syrian forces. You have not established effective communication with the Syrians, and they have been harassing the team in subtle ways. Moments ago three Syrians drove up in a jeep and they have the main gun trained on the team.

---

<sup>7</sup>Pedersen (1994) describes a number of relatively simple-to-execute small group exercises.

How would you like to respond?  
How would you be expected to respond?  
How would you respond?

**Culture Assimilator (Fiedler, Mitchell, & Triandis, 1971).** Culture assimilators are paper-and-pencil instruments used to introduce trainees to a culture very quickly. They are espoused for situations where the trainee will have very little time to learn about the culture. A culture assimilator presents critical incidents and one or more multiple choice questions for each incident. The questions are designed to reveal cultural assumptions and values. An example SF incident might be:

A Haitian child had a broken arm. Her mother was distressed and wanted to see a witch doctor, but the medic was in a hurry and treated the child without the witch doctor. The child did not return for her follow-up visit.

Multiple choice questions following the incident would illuminate the role of blessings and rituals in Haitian culture, culture-specific values in treating females, and so on.

**Other Methods.** Of course, intercultural communication training runs the full gamut of methods. A laundry list of other methods includes:

Self-Assessment of strengths and weaknesses,  
Role Plays and simulation exercises,  
Field trips,  
Self-Study with reading list,  
Lecture and discussion,  
Audiovisual presentations,  
Interviews with experts from the culture, and  
Observations of interactions.

### **Summary**

Key conclusions drawn from the preceding sections are:

- Culture-specific training should be coupled with training about human behavior in general to overcome stereotyping and to enable trainees to deal with novel situations.
- Several tests and exercises available to the Army measure abilities related to intercultural communication, and several other exercises could be developed to facilitate selection of individuals likely to be adept in intercultural communication.
- There are eight behavior-based SF intercultural communication performance categories that could usefully guide development and evaluation of SF training programs. Those eight categories vary in the extent to which they require intercultural communication.

- SF offers intercultural communication training in the Q-Course, ROCs, and RSC. All of the courses provide intercultural awareness that should be a useful foundation for SF personnel. The ROC and RSC provide culture-specific knowledge that should enhance performance in performance categories that require knowledge of the culture.
- Very few of the current SF training courses build intercultural communication skill. Of course, with practice in the field, individuals develop skills on the job as they apply knowledge and awareness gained in training. SF training would need to incorporate more hands-on type exercises to further intercultural communication skill training.
- Several training techniques make use of critical incidents, a type of data USAJFKSWCS has used in the past for other purposes.

## References

Archer, L., & Fitch, K. L. (1994). Communication in Latin American multinational organizations. In R. L. Wiseman & R. Shuter (Eds.), Communicating in multinational organizations. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Boyatt, M. D. (1994). Unconventional operations forces of special operations. Special Warfare, 7(4), 10-17.

Brislin, R., & Yoshida, T. (1994). Intercultural communication training: An introduction. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Bruton, J. K. (1994). The subjective side of cross-cultural communication. Special Warfare, 7(2), 28-31.

Fiedler, F. E., Mitchell, T., & Triandis, H. C. (1971). The culture assimilator: An approach to cross-cultural training. Journal of Applied Psychology, 55, 95-102.

Gannon, M. J. (1994). Understanding global cultures: Metaphorical journeys through 17 countries. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Gudykunst, W. B. (1994). Bridging differences: Effective intergroup communication (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Hall, E. T. (1976). Beyond culture. New York: Doubleday.

Hofstede, G. (1979). Value systems in forty countries. In L. Eckensberger, W. Lonner, & Y. Poortinga (Eds.), Cross-cultural contributions to psychology. Lisse, Netherlands: Swets & Zeitlinger.

Hofstede, G. (1980). Culture's consequences. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Hofstede, G. (1991). Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind. London: McGraw-Hill.

Hofstede, G., & Bond, M. (1984). Hofstede's culture dimensions. Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 15, 417-433.

Holmes, H. A. (1994). Interview: H. Allen Holmes, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict. Special Warfare, 7(4), 46-48.

Kraemer, A. J. (1974). Workshop in intercultural communication: Handbook for instructors (HumRRO-TR-74-13). Alexandria, VA: Human Resources Research Organization.

Nash, D. E. (1994). Civil affairs in the Gulf War: Administration of an occupied town. Special Warfare, 7(4), 18-27.

Oberg, K. (1958). Culture shock and the problem of adjustment to new cultural environments. Washington, DC: Department of State.

Pedersen, P. (1994). A handbook for developing multicultural awareness (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: American Counseling Association.

Robberson, T. (1994, October 26). Macaroni means hero in Haiti town: Special Forces sergeant arrests biggest bandit, wins hearts. The Washington Post.

Ronen, S. (1989). Training the international assignee. In I. L. Goldstein and Associates (Eds.), Training and development in organizations. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Russell, T. L., Crafts, J. L., Peterson, N. G., Rohrback, M., Nee, M., & Mael, F. (1995). Development of a roadmap for U.S. Army Special Forces selection and classification research. Alexandria, VA: Human Resources Research Organization.

Russell, T. L., Crafts, J. L., Tagliareni, F. A., McCloy, R. A., & Barkley, P. (1994). Job analysis of Special Forces jobs (HumRRO FR-PRD-94-19). Alexandria, VA: Human Resources Research Organization.

Shachnow, S. (1993). Intercultural communication: The need for conceptual skills. Special Warfare, 6(1), 20-23.

Appendix A

Intercultural Communication Training Topics

by Theorist or Trainer

Topic	Brislin & Yoshida (1994)	Hofstede (1980, 1991)	Ronen (1989)	Gudykunst (1994)	Others
Practical Knowledge	Move or travel-related information				
Knowledge of Human Behavior	Social Psychology				
					Culture Shock
	Self Knowledge				
Area Specific Knowledge	History				
	Sociology				
	Economics				
	Politics				
	Geography				
Culture-Specific Knowledge	Individualism/Collectivism	Individualism/Collectivism		Individualism/Collectivism	
	Hierarchies: Class and Status	Power Distance		Power Distance	
		Uncertainty Avoidance		Uncertainty Avoidance	
		Masculinity/Femininity		Masculinity/Femininity	
				Language Usage	High-Low Context Message
	Language			Language	
					Non-Verbal Behavior
	Roles				
	Rituals and Superstitions				
	Religion, Beliefs, Values				
Culture-Related Abilities			Tolerance for Ambiguity	Tolerance for Ambiguity	
			Cultural Empathy/Low Ethnocentrism and Non-Judgmentalism	Mindfulness and Empathy	
			Behavior Flexibility	Adaptability	
			Interpersonal Skills		